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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the current methodological emphases in Sociology and to speculate on emerging patterns that will form the nature of Sociology in the future. This is done systematically through an analytical framework outlined in Diagram 1. In addition, he examines the problems and potentials for interdisciplinary efforts involving other related disciplines. It is observed that a state of methodological pluralism continues to persist today characterized by a number of overlapping special methodologies that can be subsumed under two more general orientations: empirical emphasis and the rational emphasis in Diagram 2; the former still predominates but is giving ground to the latter. In an "Outline of Observation" he abstracts and generalizes the current predominant emphases and describes the major emerging patterns of change. He predicts that pluralism will persist and become desirable. A selected list of relatively current materials relevant to this subject is provided. (Author/SBE)

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

MODES OF SOCIOLOGICAL BEHAVIOR:
THE EMERGING PATTERN*



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Abstract*

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the current methodological emphases in Sociology and to speculate on emerging patterns that will form the nature of Sociology in the future. This will be done systematically through an analytical framework outlined in Diagram 1. In addition, I intend to examine the problems and potentials for interdisciplinary efforts involving Sociology and other related disciplines.

It was observed that a state of methodological pluralism continues to persist in Sociology today characterized by a number of overlapping special methodologies that can be subsumed under two more general prevailing sets of methodological orientations -- "Empirical Emphasis" and the "Rational Emphasis", Diagram 2. The former still predominates but is giving ground to the latter. In an "Outline of Observations" I have attempted to spell-out relatively specifically the current predominant emphases in Sociology and describe the emerging patterns of change in these. The necessity to abstract and generalize the major patterns in this analysis should not lead one to believe that Sociology is becoming less heterogeneous in its methodological orientations -- it is not. In fact, it is my prediction that, not only will methodological pluralism persist, but that this state of affairs will become accepted as desirable. This, in turn, will reduce the sometimes highly emotional confrontations of contending methodologies.

A selected list of relatively current materials relevant to this subject has been provided for those who care to check the validity of my observations or to pursue the subject further.

*I would like to acknowledge the influence of my mentor and colleague, Dr. Robert C. Bealer of Penn State, on the development of the analytical tools used here.

Diagram 1. Analytical Framework for Meta-Sociological Investigations

A. <u>What is to be studied?</u>	B. <u>How is it to be studied?</u>	C. <u>Why is it to be studied?</u>					
<u>Unit of Study</u>	<u>Unit of Observation</u>	<u>Use of Induction</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Mode of vs.</u>	<u>Type of Causation</u>	<u>Mode of Analysis</u>	<u>Meliorative Concern</u>
				<u>Observation</u>	<u>Measures</u>	<u>vs.</u>	
				<u>Generalization</u>	<u>Association</u>		

1. Normative Statements (What Sociology should be.)

2. Objective Patterns (What Sociologists do.)*

*The presentation will focus on observations of objectively determined behavioral patterns of the present and proposed emerging trends that project the future.

Diagram 2. The Two Predominant Methodological Patterns Existing in Sociology and Projections for Change.*

<u>Methodological Consideration</u>	<u>Empirical Emphases (Predominant)</u>	<u>Degree of Change Predicted</u>	<u>Rational Emphasis (Not Predominant)</u>
<u>Use of Theory</u>	Negative	+++ →	Positive
<u>Induction-Deduction</u>	Induction	++ →	Deduction
<u>Generalization</u>	Idiographic	++++ →	Nomothetic
<u>Mode of Observation</u>	Survey Case Studies	+ →	Direct Observation (Subjective)
<u>Measurement</u>	Quantitative	±	Qualitative
<u>Causation</u>	Negative (Correlation)	+ →	Positive
<u>Modes of Analysis</u>	Multiple Variable Statistical Designs	±	Typological
<u>Unit of Study</u>	Aggregates Micro Systems	+ →	Social Systems Macro Systems
<u>Unit of Observation</u>	Individual	+ →	Analytical Units of Systems

*For supportive statements see the following references: Friedrichs, 1970; McCartney, 1970; Duke, 1967; Glaser and Straus, 1967; Hammond, 1964; Falding, 1963; Zetterberg, 1963; Sjoberg, 1959; and McKinney, 1957.

Outline of Observations

A.	Units (What?)	Present	Future
(1) Of Study	Sociological "nominalism" prevails. Aggregates of individuals are studied for the most part.	More emphasis on: Communities Cultural Regions Societies Interspecies Comparisons	More emphasis on: Analytical units of macro systems (i.e. social cohesion, social mobility, social strata)
(2) Of Observation	Individual behavior and traits Interpersonal actions Role segments of micro units	Concern with interpenetration of system levels and integration of units at any one level.	51

Outline of Observations (Cont.)

B.	Methods (How?)	Present	Future
(1) Use of Theory	<p>A dichotomy tends to exist between theorizing and observation.</p> <p>Theory brought into research mostly ex post facto.</p> <p>Much of what passes as theory is made up of conceptual and typological efforts.</p> <p>Much problem oriented research is atheoretical</p>	<p>More emphasis on: Limited theoretical statements at a low level of abstraction.</p> <p>Research evolving as tests of hypotheses derived from abstract theory.</p> <p>Codification and synthesis of past research results in relation to emerging segments of theory.</p>	
(2) Induction-Deduction	<p>Inductive-emphasis on "empirical generalizations"</p> <p>Emphasis on ex post facto theoretical interpretation of findings</p>	<p>More emphasis on completing deductive-inductive-deductive circle of inference.</p> <p>More stress on formalization of process of deductive derivations.</p>	
(3) Description-Generalization	<p>Although a strong emphasis still persists for endless fact-gathering and a conservative orientation toward drawing broad generalizations, this is matched by an equal concern with the need to produce general statements of fact (that are time bound).</p> <p>Intensive, detailed description of cases is still common -- particularly in respect to study of Macro units.</p>	<p>Emphasis on placing need for generalization ahead of verification.</p> <p>Increasing concern with codification and synthesis of accumulated facts.</p>	5

Outline of Observations (Cont.)

	Present	Future
(4) <u>Mode of Observation</u>	Predominantly strong emphasis on indirect survey techniques implemented by someone other than the analyst. General lack of attention to problem of validity.	More concern with utilizing several modes of observation simultaneously. More emphasis on direct observation by analyst. Increasing use of participation observation.
(5) <u>Type of Measures</u>	Predominant reliance on quantification in terms of nominal and ordinal measures.	Increasing use of qualitative distinctions. Quantification will still prevail and move in direction of a higher level of ordinal measurement, with some attempts to derive ordered metric scales for select variables.
(6) <u>Causation-Association</u>	Correlation Prediction	More emphasis on complex causation configurations and explanation. A greater number of longitudinal studies to facilitate drawing causal inferences.

Outline of Observations (Cont.)

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Future</u>
(7) <u>Mode of Analysis</u>	<p><u>Statistical</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Simple two or three variable cross-classifications.</u><u>Stress on establishing associations among variables.</u><u>Easy reliance on results of statistical tests for judgmental decisions.</u>	<p>More emphasis on interpretive analysis of qualitative variables.</p> <p>Statistical analysis will move to more complex multiple variable analyses ("path analysis") and stress magnitude of associations.</p> <p>More sophisticated use and evaluation of statistical techniques.</p>
(8) <u>Melliorative Concern</u>	<p>Pretense of Value-free orientation toward research.</p> <p>Lack of explication of assumptions and possible researcher biases.</p>	<p>Certainly greater concern with practical significance of research results.</p> <p>A greater tendency for researchers to make explicit values and assumptions.</p>
(9) <u>Interdisciplinary Research</u>	<p>Strong normative agreement on desire for interdisciplinary collaboration.</p> <p>Lack of success in stimulating such action.</p> <p>Tendency to attempt to merge models of individual disciplines into one inclusive model.</p>	<p>Increasing pressure from sources of support for social science research to develop collaborative interdisciplinary programs.</p> <p>Inclinations of Sociologists toward this will become increasingly positive as they gain analytical tools and better measures.</p> <p>Emphasis will be on maintenance of separate but tangential disciplinary models.</p>

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